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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES

BRIEFING

EDITORIAL OPINION

Friday, August 26, 2005

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

DAS Bryza: "PKK is US, Iraqi, Turkish Problem - Hurriyet
Sakik Calls on Ocalan to Give Up Armed Struggle - Hurriyet
US Formula Against the PKK - Sabah
A New Front Against Ocalan - Milliyet
US Praises Turkey for Democracy Drive - Milliyet
Greek Cypriots Launch Initiative for Counter-Delaration -
Aksam
Conflict Among Shiites in Iraq - Aksam
Support from US to Erdogan - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

Shiite Clashes Spreads-Radikal
US: "Turkey's Steps on Democratization are Impressive -
Radikal
Bush Determined to Continue War in Iraq - Cumhuriyet
DAS Bryza: "No Magic Wand to Eliminate PKK"-Cumhuriyet
Foreign Ministry Warns Revival of Article 8 Would Harm EU
Drive - Zaman
US Examines Turkish Model for Training of Imams - Zaman
MIT Investigates TV, Radios Planning Kurdish Broadcasting -
Zaman
US Requests Imams from Turkish Religious Affairs - Yeni
Safak

BRIEFING

DAS Matt Bryza Visits Ankara: All papers report on US Deputy Assistant Secretary Matt Bryza's second visit to Turkey within the past month. During the first day of his two-day visit, Bryza met with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, Religious Affairs officials, and officials at the Foreign Ministry. Following his meeting with Foreign Ministry Deputy Undersecretary Ertugrul Apakan, Bryza told reporters that he had had fruitful meetings with Turkish officials. "Hurriyet" reports that Bryza expressed full support to Turkey ont the PKK and Cyprus issues. Bryza underlined that the US is determined to coordinate with Turkey in every field to eliminate the PKK. He said the PKK is a common problem for Turkey, the US, and Iraq. 'It is in the US interest to eliminate the PKK,' Bruza stressed, adding that 'we cannot stop PKK or other terrorism in Iraq by pushing a button.' "Sabah" highlighted Bryza's claim that the US is working on a new effort aimed at the arrest of PKK leaders in Europe, the shutting down of PKK-affiliated media outlets such as "Roj-TV," and the interdiction of financial flows to the PKK. Bryza stressed that the PKK issue cannot be resolved solely through military means. "Sabah" also highlighted Bryza's positive comments on the state of the US-Turkish bilateral relationship. Bryza acknowledged that there had been a period of tension in the relationship earlier this year, but added the Turkish-US relations had 'hit bottom' and had now started to rebound. Islamist-oriented "Zaman" reported that when asked about his visit to the Religious Affairs Directorate, Bryza noted that 'among Muslim countries, Turkey is the most successful secular democracy. The Religious Affairs office employs imams, and ensures that the country's secularism is preserved. This office provides secular control over mosques and imams in Turkey. Religious Affairs may be able to help us work with our allies in Turkey and in Europe to help immigrants from Turkey, Morocco, and Algeria, who have became disconnected from their own traditions. These traditions provide a natural shield against extremism.' "Radikal" columnist Murat Yetkin drew attention to two messages issued by Bryza. When asked about the possible revival of Cyprus talks, Bryza said that the uncompromising attitudes of the Greek Cypriot leader Papadopoulos could lead to recognition of Northern Cyprus as a separate political entity by a third country at

some point. Bryza added that demands for the recognition of Greek Cyprus by Turkey as a precondition for the start of EU entry talks are ill-advised.

US Charge McEldowney Visits State Minister Tuzmen: US Embassy Charge d'affaires Nancy McEldowney said after a meeting with State Minister for Trade Kursad Tuzmen that 'the US is determined to cooperate with Turkey in the fight against terrorism.' When she was asked about the concrete results of that cooperation, McEldowney said that 'Turkey is impatient in solution of PKK problem. I understand the reason for this impatience. The US is ready to exert every effort for a solution to this complicated problem.' McEldowney recalled that the US has always supported Turkey in the fight against terrorism. Minister Tuzmen in turn said that the US is 'doing a lot of singing' about fighting against the PKK, but now Turkey 'wanted to see some dancing.'

US Praises Turkey's Democracy Drive: In a written response to a question taken at the State Department press briefing earlier this week, US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that the US has long supported Turkey's democratization efforts as it continues on its path toward the European Union. MacCormack noted that Turkey has made impressive strides on democratization and human rights issues, as reflected by the European Union decision to grant Turkey a date for accession talks.

Semdin Sakik Urges Ocalan to end PKK Violence: "Hurriyet" gives extensive front page coverage to a letter by jailed PKK militant Semdin Sakik to jailed PKK leader Osman Ocalan calling on Ocalan to give up the PKK's armed struggle and urge militants to lay down their arms. The paper recalled that Sakik had been Ocalan's right-hand man when the two men controlled PKK attacks back in the 1990s. In his letter, Sakik wrote that 'your only responsibility in solving the Kurdish issue is to make the PKK militants lay down their weapons.'

Kurdish Groups Form New Front Against PKK: "Milliyet" reports that Kurdish groups not connected to PKK are making new efforts to restart Kurdish political movements. One new movement is led by HAK-PAR leader Abdulmelik Firat. Another group is chaired by Kurdish activist Serafettin Elci, a former government minister. Firat is planning to convene a meeting of Kurdish activists and intellectuals in Ankara September 4 to discuss the way forward. Elci says he is accelerating work to establish a new political party. Both groups want to become alternatives to Leyla Zana's Democratic Society Movement (DTH), which is increasingly being regarded as a satellite of the PKK terror organization.

MIT Investigating TV Stations Seeking to Start Kurdish Language Broadcasts: "Zaman" reports that Turkish intelligence (MIT) has initiated investigations against TV and radio channels that have applied to begin Kurdish language broadcasts. Local TV and radio channels must obtain permission from the Supreme Broadcasting Board (RTUK) before launching the broadcasts. "Zaman" says that while making its decision about the applications, RTUK will take into account the MIT report.

General Electric to Enter Turkish Banking Sector: Papers report that the US-based General Electric Consumer Finance Corporation has reached agreement with the Dogus Holding Group on the purchase of a 25.5 percent stake in Garanti Bank. The deal would reportedly be worth about 1.8 billion USD. It would represent the first significant US investment in Turkey's banking sector.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq; Gaza Disengagement

"Iraq's Constitution"
Erhan Basyurt wrote in the Islamist-intellectual "Zaman" (8/26): "The new Iraqi constitution was drafted by the Shiites and the Kurds, while objections from the Sunnis were ignored. At this point, fundamental changes to the text seem unlikely. The constitutional draft includes advanced standards on freedom and minority rights. It accepts Arabic and Kurdish as the two official languages, and paves the way for Kurdish language education in a federal region of Kurdistan. . Other minorities, such as Turkmens and Assyrians, are not ignored either. Their right to education in their mother tongue will be allowed upon request. . It is also important that the Iraqi constitution defines a good structure with regard to the relationship between the state and religion. The constitution accepts Islam as the state's official religion, but rules out the passage of any law which is against both Islam and democracy. In other words, Iraq will not be a religious state, and a conflict between the state and religion is prevented. . The main issue about the new constitution is the extent to which it will really be implemented, even if it is approved by the people of Iraq. The constitution, in its current form, could bring chaos to Iraq in the short term, because Iraq does not have

a deeply-rooted democratic experience. On the contrary, Iraq presents a complex picture with its competing ethnic, linguistic, and religious groupings. Given the impact of tribal culture in daily life and the low level of education, Iraq may not continue to sail toward freedom, but may find itself in chaos and under pressure from divisive forces. Deferring the status of Kirkuk until 2007 is another potential problem for Iraq's future. . Under its new constitution, Iraq is designed to be a model for the region. Let's hope that it will not end up being dragged into a chaos of freedom."

"Sharon's Plan"

Kamuran ozbir wrote in the nationalist "Ortadogu" (8/26): "Israel has pulled out of the Gaza strip, but that does not necessarily represent a defeat for the Sharon administration. As expressed by Israeli authorities, the withdrawal decision was not the result of terrorist attacks. Israel had managed to control the level of attacks prior to the withdrawal plan. Israel still has control over the withdrawal plan, and is implementing it by gaining even more power than before in Eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank. . Even after the withdrawal, the big picture in the Middle East still favors Israel. Israel continues to control the West Bank, and has provided only a small relief for the Palestinians by pulling out from a limited area."

MCELDOWNEY